

By a vote of 246 to 161, House endorses Vermont-inspired energy-saving legislation



The U.S. House on Thursday passed bipartisan, job-creating legislation that will help three million families refit, renovate and insulate their homes, while putting 170,000 Americans to work.

Authored by Rep. Peter Welch, the Home Star Energy Retrofit Act (H.R. 5019) passed the House by a vote of 246 to 161. The bill, which provides direct incentives to consumers to make their homes more energy efficient, received key endorsements from supporters ranging from President Obama to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers.

"Home Star is a practical, common sense investment in job creation and energy savings. By partnering with the private sector and homeowners, this bipartisan bill will create jobs in construction, manufacturing and retail," Welch said. "Vermont has shown that investing in energy efficiency works. Now the rest of the country will have a chance to benefit from the Home Star hat-trick of job creation, energy savings and reduced carbon emissions."

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[What is Home Star?](#)

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[Who Supports Home Star?](#)

Home Star is a two-year program designed to spur home energy retrofits by providing direct incentives to homeowners to install American-made, energy-saving products and conduct whole-home retrofits. The legislation will help three million families save an estimated \$200-\$500 a year on their utility bills, saving homeowners close to ten billion dollars in the next decade.

Introduced by Welch on April 14, H.R. 5019 was cosponsored by a bipartisan group of legislators, including Chairman Ed Markey, Rep. Vern Ehlers, Rep. Dennis Cardoza and Chairman Henry Waxman. Home Star was based on an earlier bill introduced by Welch last March, called Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance (H.R. 1778), which was passed by the House as part of the Waxman/Markey energy bill (H.R. 2454).

Home Star received key backing from nearly 500,000 businesses and organizations. On Wednesday, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Association of Home Builders announced that votes related to H.R. 5019 would be considered in their annual legislative scorecards. President Obama endorsed the initiative last December, and his administration said in a statement Wednesday that it, "applauds the bipartisan efforts that have brought H.R. 5019 to the House floor."

H.R. 5019 includes two types of consumer incentives. The first, Silver Star, provides up-front rebates for specific energy-saving investments, including insulation, duct sealing, windows and doors, air sealing and water heaters. Homeowners receive up to \$1,500 per improvement – capped at a total of \$3,000 or 50 percent of the total project cost.

The second, Gold Star, rewards homeowners who conduct a comprehensive energy audit and implement measures to reduce energy use. Consumers receive \$3,000 for a demonstrated

energy savings of 20 percent, plus an additional \$1,000 for each additional 5 percent energy savings – capped at \$8,000 or 50 percent of the project cost.